

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY ARA/CAR:ACHEWITT:MES/BTK
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ARA:SASHELTON
S/S-O RCASTRODALE

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R 150325Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

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EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADOR FROM TODMAN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP

SUBJECT: PROTECTION OF DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL

REFS: A) PARAMARIBO 482 AND B) PARAMARIBO 429

1. ON APRIL 4 AMBASSADOR KARAMAT CALLED ON ME TO DISCUSS SEVERAL TOPICS, INCLUDING THE RICCIUTI CASE AND ITS HANDLING BY THE AUTHORITIES. KARAMAT'S PRESENTATION PARALLELED THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN REF A, I.E., THAT THE GOS HAD CONDUCTED AN INVESTIGATION OF THE INCIDENT AND CONCLUDED THAT THE ALLEGATIONS THAT MRS. RICCIUTI HAD BEEN ATTACKED BY THE DRIVER OF THE MOTOR SCOOTER, AND THAT POLICE ON THE SCENE HAD FAILED TO TAKE ACTION IN HER DEFENSE, WERE BOTH WITHOUT FOUNDATION. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT SINCE MRS. RICCIUTI HAD BEEN LEGALLY IN THE WRONG AND HAD ADMITTED RESPONSIBILITY, OFFERING TO PAY FOR ANY DAMAGES.

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AGES INCURRED TO THE SCOOTER, AND SINCE SHE HERSELF HAD NOT SUFFERED ANY PERMANENT HARM, THE GOS DID NOT INTEND TO PURSUE THE MATTER AND CONSIDERED IT CLOSED. HE DID SAY, AS YOU REPORTED DIRECTOR HEINEMANN HAD SAID, THAT HIS GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED THE STRENGTH OF YOUR NOTE OF PROTEST TO BE "DISPROPORTIONATE" TO THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE INCIDENT. HOWEVER, THEY WERE NOT PREPARED TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF THIS.

2. I MADE CLEAR TO AMBASSADOR KARAMAT THAT TO ASSURE THE WELFARE OF MEMBERS OF THE STAFF OF AN EMBASSY AND THEIR DEPENDENTS WAS AMONG THE FIRST RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN AMBASSADOR, AND THAT THE EMBASSY HAD ACTED CORRECTLY IN INSISTING ON A COMPLETE OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH THE FACTS, WITH EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT ONCE THOSE FACTS WERE KNOWN THE GOVERNMENT OF SURINAM WOULD LIVE UP TO ITS OWN OBLIGATIONS WITH REGARD TO THE PROTECTION OF DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL. I TOLD KARAMAT THAT WE WERE PLEASED AN INVESTIGATION HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT, AND THAT WE HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO ACCEPT ITS RESULTS AT FACE VALUE. OUR MAIN CONCERN WAS THE WELFARE OF MRS. RICCIUTI AND HAPPILY SHE HAD SUFFERED NO PERMANENT HARM.

3. IT WAS MORE DIFFICULT FOR ME TO RESPOND TO KARAMAT'S ASSERTION THAT THE STRENGTH OF THE LANGUAGE OF YOUR NOTE OF PROTEST WAS "DISPROPORTIONATE" TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INCIDENT SINCE WE HAD NOT YET RECEIVED THE TEXT OF THE NOTE. KARAMAT HAD WITH HIM A CABLE FROM HIS MINISTRY SUMMARIZING THE TEXT OF THE EMBASSY'S NOTE FROM WHICH HE READ PORTIONS FOR ME. I RESERVED JUDGEMENT ON THIS ISSUE MERELY REPEATING THAT YOU WERE WELL WITHIN YOUR RIGHTS IN REQUESTING A COMPLETE INVESTIGATION.

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4. WHATEVER THE MERITS OF THE CASE AND THE TRUTH OR FALSEHOOD OF THE VARIOUS ALLEGATIONS, THE GOS HAS OBVIOUSLY BEEN EMBARRASSED AND CONCERNED BY IT. HOPEFULLY ONE RESULT WILL BE A MORE COMPLETE REALIZATION BY THE POLICE OF THEIR OBLIGATIONS TOWARD DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL. YOU INDICATE IN YOUR CABLE THAT YOU DO NOT FEEL ANY USEFUL PURPOSE WILL BE SERVED BY FURTHER ACTION AT THE OFFICIAL LEVEL, AND SINCE YOU MAKE NO MENTION OF IT, I ASSUME MRS. RICCIUTI IS NOT INTERESTED IN FILING CHARGES OR PURSUING THE MATTER IN THE COURTS. THEREFORE, WE ARE PREPARED TO LET THE MATTER DROP AS AMBASSADOR KARAMAT SUGGESTS AND THE GOS OBVIOUSLY WANTS TO DO. HOWEVER, YOU-SHOULD KEEP US FULLY INFORMED IF THERE ARE FURTHER RAMIFICATIONS. SHOULD THERE BE FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS OR ANY NEW INCIDENTS, WE WILL CONSULT WITH YOU ON POSSIBLE ACTIONS.

5. PLEASE CONVEY MY CONCERN AND REGRET OVER THIS INCIDENT TO MR. AND MRS. RICCIUTI, AND INDICATE BOTH I AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHELTON HAVE BEEN PERSONALLY INVOLVED AT THIS END. CHRISTOPHER

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